

**Comprehensive Transportation Plan Citizen Visioning Committee
Visioning Workshop Meeting Notes
Wednesday, October 26, 2011**

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan Citizen Visioning Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 3:00 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room, 201 West Gray, on the 26th day of October, 2011. Notice and Agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City of Norman website 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Mayor Cindy Rosenthal
Councilmember Linda Lockett

ABSENT:

Ms. Teresa Capps, Chair-SVSC
Mr. Walt Strong, Administrator- Westheimer Airport
Mr. Nick Hathaway, OU VP for Admin and Finance

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

Mr. Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works
Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Traffic Engineer
Mr. David Riesland, Assistant Traffic Engineer
Ms. Julie Shelton, Administrative Technician

**STAKEHOLDER VISIONING
COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Mr. Chris Applegate, Red Earth Group, Sierra Club
Mr. Roger Brown, Norman Public Schools
Mr. Harold Heiple, Norman Developer’s Council
Mr. Marion Hutchison, ONTRAC board
Mr. Doug Myers, Director-CART
Ms. Chris Nanny, Chair- CART Disability Advisory Committee
Ms. Janice Oak, Progressive Independence
Ms. Renee O’Leary, United Way-Seniors Council, Positive Aging Initiative
Ms. Helen Robertson, Representative - bicycle community
Mr. Tom Sherman, Chair - Chamber Transportation Committee
Mr. Joe Sparks, Chair- NCVB
Mr. Chuck Thompson, Chair - Central OK Regional Advocacy Alliance
Mr. Larry Walker, Chair - Public Art Board
Mr. Brad Worster, Commercial Realtor/ Norman Next

OTHER GUESTS PRESENT:

Mr. Charlie Schwinger, Lochner
Mr. Kevin Kokes, Lochner
Ms. Sadie Robb, Lochner

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES FROM VISIONING COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS.

Mr. Schwinger welcomes the committee for the second meeting and introduces Ms. Robb and Mr. Kokes. Ms. Robb began by stating that the social media sites are fully functioning including Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. These sites can be accessed through the City of Norman website. Brief discussion on the photos taken from the bus tour from the first meeting of September 22, 2011. These photos with notations included can be viewed on Flickr.

Mr. Kokes gave remarks about the summaries from the stakeholder interviews that captured major issues or concerns from each stakeholder. These summaries were organized based on the ten categories that were identified by ACOG through the Encompass 2035 process which is the regional dialogue currently taking place. Mr. Kokes affirmed that these goals and strategies have been used as part of the ward meetings by asking citizens attending the meetings to provide feedback as well as whether they feel like the regional goals and strategies are appropriate.

Mr. Kokes noted that these summaries are being provided to assist in writing the questions that will be incorporated in the City-wide survey and also with the goal preparation for the next meeting. Mr. O'Leary added comments to clarify where the content came from for the stakeholder interviews. It was clarified that this content was carefully developed over the past five years as regional focal points of transportation within the regional Plan.

DISCUSSION OF VISIONING COMMITTEE SURVEY RESULTS.

Mr. Schwinger thanked everyone who participated in the online survey and stated that there were thirteen responses. The survey results were shown to the committee graphically and Mr. Schwinger explained how the results were ranked. These survey questions included the following topics:

- Existing Conditions
- Future Conditions
- Implementation
- Goals, Policies, and Measures of Performance

Mr. Heiple made comments that the community's major streets are a priority and ranked them as his number one objective. Mr. Kokes stated that one of the major concerns in most of the ward meetings to date included the emphasis on the pedestrian/bicycle network locally as opposed to transit services and opened this item up for discussion. Comments from Mr. Heiple included his statements that by focusing on street improvements, the pedestrian/bicycle concerns would be taken care of simultaneously. Discussion ensued which included expanded comments from Mr. Heiple, Mr. Thompson, and Ms. Robertson. This discussion also included concerns on the challenges of prioritizing the survey to deciding on primary goals and objectives of the committee.

Mr. Schwinger remarked that the important component of the Plan has to be implementation that will include a method of setting priorities. Mr. Hutchison commented on how the local transportation Plan plays on what is being done regionally and Mr. Sherman agreed and declared that the transportation Plan for Norman should integrate well with the regional Plan.

Mr. Schwinger proceeded in going over the survey questions. Mr. O'Leary asked for clarification from the committee on their viewpoint of safety and how each one views this term. Ms. Nanny stated that she viewed safety issues for certain segments of the population including individuals in wheelchairs, the elderly, children, bicyclists, and pedestrians and that it is her viewpoint that certain intersections in Norman are not safe. Ms. Nanny expanded by stating that there is a very large population who are disabled who have observed many areas in Norman to be unsafe. Discussion continued with comments from Mr. Hutchison in regards to turn lanes, as well as comments from Mr. Applegate and Mr. Sherman. Ms. Robertson made comment that the key in the Plans is connectivity. Mr. Walker stated that he would like to have more information including traffic counts to see what areas need more focus. Mr. Kokes asked for more clarification from the committee on the quality of life question. Mr. Applegate remarked that other amenities be available other than automobiles. Ms. O'Leary suggested access for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities with a focus on stores and parking lots due to their quality of life being limited if these are not easily accessible. Ms. Nanny commented that if the zoning were changed in residential areas to include some commercial properties, access to stores would be easier for the disabled and handicapped. Mr. Heiple acknowledged this and expanded that there is a distinction between the ability to have access to get anywhere in Norman on a bicycle and then the focus to have a safe place for children to ride bicycles and stated that "Development follows Transportation". Mr. O'Leary agreed that there should be a linkage of transportation and land use and Mr. Heiple followed up by stating that something needs to be developed that the voters will agree on and approve.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: FUTURE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FRAMEWORK.

Ms. Robb had the committee break into four groups to discuss the survey topics noted to include 1) existing conditions, 2) future conditions, 3) implementation, and 4) goals, policies, and measures of performance. These group discussions lasted approximately thirty minutes.

SUMMARY OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS.

Ms. Robb asked the committee to choose one person to read over the each group discussion:

1. Group 1 – Existing Conditions

- Traffic Congestion – Mr. Walker reads over the first question of whether the Plan should develop strategies and recommend solutions for existing congested areas. Mr. Walker answers that the group agreed that the level of service should be the highest level feasible meaning practical considerations in financing, available space and right of way will dictate what can be done. It was also expanded that any new development areas should have a higher benchmark.

- Traffic Safety – Mr. Walker answered the question of whether the Plan should include the top locations for accidents and safety concerns and it was confirmed that more data is needed. The last question for safety was how often should the list of high accident locations be updated and the group agreed that this list should be updated annually citywide and semi annually for high accident areas.
- Bike/Pedestrian – Mr. Walker answered the question on whether the Plan should include a citywide sidewalk Plan and the group suggested that an evaluation be done as to where the city is today and include problem areas. This evaluation should include the individuals who use the sidewalks including individuals with disabilities and the elderly. Mr. Walker pointed out that the location of the sidewalks in relations to the street should also be reviewed as well.
- Transit – Mr. Walker answered the question on whether the Plan should study existing routes and scheduling to improve service and accessibility to current transit services and the group agreed that more data is needed to determine the annual usage and what groups of people use this service.
- The group agreed that a Plan should be developed for the location of a multi-modal hub or hubs to serve different modes of transportation and stated that the hubs should include accessibility to all types of users. Several other considerations were included such as the possibility of federal funding, projected usage, parking availability, and making sure the locations are in an area with high user numbers.

2. Group 2 – Future Conditions

- Traffic Growth – Ms. Robertson answered the question on whether the Plan should consider alternatives to constructing infrastructure that reduces demand and the group agreed that the roadways should be widened, but alternatives should also be considered. The second question of whether space for future transportation facilities be reserved and/or identified as part of the Plan and the group agreed that this space should be reserved.
- Transit – Ms. Robertson answered that the Plan should study ways to improve usage of transit services by integrating with ACOG and ODOT studies and increasing public knowledge to optimize what the city already has in existence. Ms. Robertson answered the second question that asked what the Plan should incorporate or study further relating to ongoing regional transit dialogue and the groups agreed that the City should integrate their information with what ACOG and ODOT have in existence.
- Long Range Improvements - Ms. Robertson answered that the priorities for future capital investments in transportation should be established based on political will and support citywide. The group agreed that the second question of how the Plan should balance priorities between new infrastructure construction and preservation/maintenance of existing streets should be addressed based on the need and funding and also make sure that there is public support. Ms. Robertson stated that in order to balance investments

between roadway improvements and other modes of travel such as transit, bicycle and walking, each would need to be evaluated on a case by case basis. There was also agreement that the transportation Plan needs integration of a bike and pedestrian Plan.

- **System Planning** – Ms. Robertson answered the first question as whether the Plan should develop a variety of recommended street improvement design templates that integrate various modes of travel where appropriate by acknowledging that the group agreed with this idea. The second question addressed the integration of bicycle, pedestrian and traffic accommodations with streets improvements or whether the Plan should make recommendations for key corridors to focus certain modes of travel. Ms. Robertson stated that each corridor should be evaluated and a determination made on its use. It was emphasized to specify which streets would have vehicle use only and which streets would be safe for accommodating bicycle/pedestrian use. The group agreed on the question of whether the Plan should identify key corridors for future major traffic/capacity roadways as a means to accommodate new growth areas but stated that other solutions would be needed to relieve traffic in the core areas of Norman.

Brief discussion from several on the committee including comments from Mr. Thompson and Mr. Sherman. The discussion included thoughts on safe north/south connectivity for bicycles including east/west connectivity and that to accomplish this process, a main transportation area would have to be established. Mr. Applegate asked for clarification on how to compile the cost for the maintenance of a four-lane road. Mr. Schwinger confirmed that some cities have pavement management systems that can configure a cost assessment for maintenance of the roads. Mr. Applegate made suggestions of lowering the costs on the maintenance of roads. Mr. Heiple remarked that it is the developer's responsibility to pay for certain costs including water and sewer lines in a new subdivision, but clarified that once the street is installed and bonded, then it becomes the maintenance responsibility of the City.

3. Group 3 – Implementation

- **Priorities** – Mr. Hutchison answered the first question of what tangible and intangible factors should the Plan consider when prioritizing investments in transportation. The group agreed that the tangible factors should be based on actual infrastructure conditions. Mr. Hutchison then noted that there were safety concerns and quality of life issues on intangible factors. The second question asked how the Plan would address a gap in the network if funds become available for a specific project. The group agreed that the benefit would have to be evaluated and the costs weighed.
- **Short range improvements** – Mr. Hutchison addressed the question of whether the Plan should explore and recommend alternatives to current traffic calming procedures that achieve the goal of calming traffic speeds. The group agreed that it would be important to address the safety issues and quality of life issues as well. The answer to the second question of whether the Plan should make recommendations to address measures for roadway improvements in the core area of Norman to help preserve the quality of life and minimize impacts was that the focus should be on maintaining the surface of the roadways including sidewalks and curbs. The group emphasized that maintaining the character of

the neighborhoods is important. Mr. Hutchison answered the last question that asked if given limited resources, should the Plan prioritize improvements that first address existing traffic problems before new improvements are constructed in growth areas. The group agreed that this is critical to the effectiveness of the entire network.

- Long range improvements – Mr. Hutchison answered the question of what should be the basis for establishing a list of long range improvements by stating that an inventory should be created and base the importance on community priorities, funding availability and effectiveness of the improvements on the overall network. The last question asked whether the Plan should address the relationship between land development practices and the need for transportation improvements and the group agreed.
- Financing strategies – Mr. Hutchison read over the last set of questions to include whether the City should implement additional revenue sources if the traditional funding sources for maintenance and street improvements are limited, whether the Plan should explore new options for funding transportation improvements, and whether the Plan should examine the level of contributions by new developments to infrastructure improvements. The group agreed that additional funding sources should be researched and answered yes to the two final questions.

Mr. Heiple made additional comments in regards to the short range improvements to include his suggestions that no improvements should be made to Lindsey Street until a third lane is installed from Berry Road to Elm Street and also a third lane from Lindsey street north on Berry Road. Heiple expanded on the importance of focusing on Core Norman. In addition, no single family or two family house should be permitted within 300 feet of the center of a section line road which would limit the arterials to keep single family and two family from backing up to the road. The lower density residential areas would be in the middle of a square mile to change the subdivision regulations to further require bike connectivity and pedestrian connectivity and allow certain neighborhoods commercial zoning in the middle of the addition. Mr. Heiple pointed out that changes in the zoning would assist in offsetting the correction of some issues that are currently a problem in the core areas.

4. Group 4 – Goals, Policies, and Measures of Performance

- Policies – Mr. Thompson answered the question of whether the Plan should develop, or refine, policies related to development contributions to infrastructure improvements and the financing of such improvements in growth areas by stating that the group agreed to this concept. Mr. Thompson answers the second question of whether the Plan should develop, or refine, policies for transportation management such as access management, traffic calming, sidewalk/bicycle facilities construction, and street construction. Mr. Thompson reflected on opportunities where the City lost business due to inappropriate policies and acknowledged that the group agreed to this question. The last question addressed whether the Plan should consider transportation demand management strategies to relive peak period demands. The group agreed to this consideration as well. Mr. Thompson expanded by reading this groups dialogue to include developer costs versus community infrastructure financial support. As technology has improved and increased,

the peripheral residential street development and section line road development and cost of maintaining those roads is substantially less than the cost of repairing and maintaining older, internal roads.

- **System Management** – Mr. Thompson answered the question of how important it is to have a master Plan for street, bicycle and pedestrian systems by agreeing that this is highly important. The group agreed with the second question of whether transportation in the City needs management, or should it be expected to perform adequately without ongoing attention. Mr. Thompson addressed the last question that asked how the transportation system should reflect the value of the citizens of Norman. Mr. Thompson gave an example that included the 2008 Public Transportation Plan approved by Council, but without funding has not seen implementation. Mr. Thompson expanded that the process should effectively gather appropriate public sentiment to ensure it reflect the community values, or the community will reject or be passive about the Plan either at the ballot box and/or through negative opinion.
- **Goals** – Mr. Thompson answered the question of whether the Plan should address the federal and state transportation goals to provide better opportunity to secure state and federal funding for future improvements by stating that a Plan without a viable funding source will not be implemented.
- **Measures of performance** – Mr. Thompson answered the question of whether measurements of performance should include intangible values, or only quantifiable measures by stating that the group agreed that there must be some magic in those words. Mr. Thompson moved on to the second question on whether the Plan should prepare performance measures that can be used to set priorities for improvements and the group agreed that it is not an “either/or” proposition. It was stated that quality engineers and quality designers addressing a place whether it be an intersection or a roadway can include aesthetic as well as multi-modal process and still have intersections that work. Mr. Thompson pointed out that intangible values, aesthetics, etc. do not have to be “either/or” to statistical performance measurements. It was added that well designed transportation systems do not have to neglect “style” over functional design.

Mr. Heiple made an additional comment on the question of how the transportation system reflects the values of the citizens of Norman. The suggestion was that the transportation system should efficiently and safely carry existing and future traffic. Mr. Hutchison directs additional questions about existing road surfacing.

Mr. O’Leary addressed the question and stated that the patchwork on the road surfaces in question is called “gap paving” and explained that this has been the process in Norman for many years. Mr. O’Leary continued by stating that funds are aggregated which is called “deferred payments” for pavement improvements and added that a system is needed where the development can pay for their fair share to pay for the remaining portion of the street to construct the roads at a higher quality the first time.

Mr. Heiple added comments about the street construction processes specific to West Main in the 1970's and 1980's. Additional remarks from Mr. Heiple on how much more effective the current system is on the construction of roads in Norman because of having a more qualified staff at the City of Norman offices and a development community committed to the progress of Norman. Mr. Lombardo gave remarks on what several things that have happened in Norman to allow staff and developers to work toward larger projects in Norman is due to greater access to federal funds in comparison to what was received twenty to twenty-five years earlier. Mr. Heiple gave high remarks to Mr. Lombardo on his ability to receive and acquire access to federal funds and thanked him for his efforts.

NEXT STEPS.

Mr. Schwinger thanked the committee for their participation. Mr. Schwinger continued by stating that their office is in the process of finalizing the community survey that will be sent out and confirmed that ETC will be sending out approximately 1,800 survey forms and each will be proceeded with telephone messages to inform the citizen that they will be receiving the survey soon. It was noted that the process will take six to eight weeks. Mr. Schwinger pointed out the issues that would be addressed in the survey including the current transportation issues discussed in the group discussions, system enhancements, transportation related issues, multi-modal, and finance.

Mr. Heiple suggested that the survey questions be refined from what the committee reviewed to receive answers other than "yes" or "no". Mr. Schwinger confirmed that the questions will be structured differently than what was presented to the committee for discussion purposes. Brief discussion with comments from Mr. Thompson with a strong suggestion that the terms be clarified into definition form pertinent to the transportation plan. Mr. Schwinger wrapped up the meeting by confirming that the discussion for the next meeting would be for 'goal setting' and that the goals are appropriate. Additional comments were made in regards to the questions on the survey and it was noted that the survey would be presented to the Steering Committee and direction would be taken at that time.

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION.

None.

The meeting concluded at 4:46 p.m.